



# The Battle of the Bays.

## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Now that Calverley is no more, Mr. Owen Seaman is his own most dangerous rival. He has excelled himself in *The Battle of the Bays*. . . . In this little volume the master hand is visible in every line."—*Punch*.

"The new 'Rejected Addresses' of Mr. Owen Seaman are quite worthy to be ranked with the classic volumes of Horace and James. . . . The thing is done as well as it could be. . . . This little volume is *merum sal.*"—*The Spectator*.

"Mr Kipling has never been so nimbly caught before, for Mr Seaman has the art to reproduce his flute-notes as well as his big drum. . . . Several of the miscellaneous pieces are among the very best humorous poetry of this generation. We have laughed at nothing lately more than at 'Ars Postera,' at 'A New Blue Book,' at 'To a Boy-Poet of the Decadence,' and at 'To Julia in Shooting Togs.' But, after all, Mr. Seaman's masterpiece up to date is certainly 'To the Lord of Potsdam.' . . . This will live, or we are greatly mistaken, among the most effective examples of historical satire-lyric."—*The Saturday Review*.

"It is certainly remarkable, in our dearth of great poetry, how good of its sort the satiric verse of our day is—so good, in fact, that nothing but the best will serve, and even the best, like Mr. Seaman's, which in the day when Sir George Trevelyan was a wit would have taken people's breath away, is apt to be treated as mere journalism. . . . But really it is the most characteristic expression of our time, using the accustomed forms of verse to point the neatest criticisms and the slyest of epigrams. . . . Mr. Seaman's humorous imitation of Mr. Swinburne, Sir Edwin Arnold, Sir Lewis Morris, Mr. Kipling, and the rest, is in every case very funny."

—*St. James's Gazette*.

"The book abounds in excellent fooling and really wholesome satire, the ingenuity and felicity of verse and expression giving it likewise a high artistic value. . . . Quips and cranks of audacious wit, strokes of a humour always sane and healthy, waylay the reader incessantly, and leave him no peace for laughter"—*The Westminster Gazette*.

"Mr. Seaman must be tired of being compared to Calverley and J. K. S., but he is of their company, and, what is more, on their level. 'The Battle of the Bays' . . . bristles with points; it is brilliant, . . . and it has that easy conversational flow which is the one absolutely necessary characteristic of good humorous poetry. . . . One charm of writing such as Mr. Seaman's is that it makes us feel quite obliged to poets whom we have never admired for being so good to parody."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

"Mr. Owen Seaman has a very neat talent for parody. . . . The 'Ballad of a Bun,' is exceedingly funny, and ought to make even Mr. John Davidson laugh. . . . All the imitations are good."—*The Times*

"In point of technique . . . extraordinarily clever."

—*Illustrated London News*.

"His versatility and bright and ready wit are conspicuous in all his work. As a parodist he is second to none, not even to Mr. Calverley, if we may take the word of the reviewers. . . . Mr. Seaman cracks the whip with consummate skill, and applies it with such naughty precision, that even his victims must find it difficult to withhold their admiration. . . . Of the parodies, the one of Mr. Kipling is undoubtedly the most successful. The ease with which Mr. Seaman reproduces all that is most admirable in the poet's style, while making fun of the matter, is only equal to the astonishing force of the verse and the happiness of the diction. . . . Anything

more completely successful in satiric verse than the address 'To the Lord of Potsdam' we do not know. The satire throughout is keen, trenchant, clean as the blade of a sword."—*The National Observer*.

"A volume of cleverer poetic parodies or of more humorous verse in general than Mr. Owen Seaman's 'Battle of the Bays' has not come my way for many a day. Their metrical merits are of the highest order, and—what is not by any means so common with the work of some of the neatest of light rhymesters—they positively bubble with the most unexpected fun."

—Mr. H. D. TRAILL, in *The Graphic*.

"One of the most amusing books of satiric verse produced since Calverley ceased writing. Full of entertainment for those who can appreciate rollicking fun expressed in finished and pointed verse."—*The Globe*.

"We have a very pretty satirist and an imitable parodist in Mr Owen Seaman. His 'Battle of the Bays' is so good that the fact of its being inspired by the competition for the Laureateship does not make it out of date. . . . Not a style escapes his most annoying cleverness."

—*The Sketch*.

"This, in my opinion, is the cleverest book of the kind issued for many a day. For sheer keenness and brightness it beats even the author's two previous volumes—'Horace at Cambridge' and 'Tillers of the Sand'"

—*The Whitehall Review*.

"The literary parodist of superlative excellence is a rare and remarkable apparition. To-day no man can claim greater excellence in this peculiar craft than Mr. Owen Seaman. His parodies will be found remarkable for more qualities than their superficial likenesses: he . . . reflects not only manner but matter, thinking for the nonce with the brains of another, and producing work that is all his own, and yet—save for the underlying humour—might perfectly well belong to somebody else. . . . He has distinction also and a natural greatness of heart proper to the humourist."

—*Black and White*.

"The fun and cleverness of Mr. Owen Seaman's 'Battle of the Bay,' which we dealt with fully last month, have been widely recognised by this time"—*Weekly Sun*.

"It is just such a gift book as we should ourselves like to have, if we did not already possess it. . . . These parodies are themselves imitable. They are not a mere trick by which a style, an air, a form of expression is caught; rather they are a revelation of the essential self in the essential style of the original writer."—*Yorkshire Herald*.

"They are sufficiently fresh and witty to live for many a day longer in book form."—*Glasgow Herald*.

"Mr. Owen Seaman is, to our thinking, the wittiest and aptest writer of parody and humorous verse who has appeared since the days of Calverley. . . . This slim volume contains some of his best work, such as the amazingly clever 'Ballad of a Bun.' . . . The book is one that should stand on every book-shelf next to 'Fly-Leaves.'"—*Bookselling*.

"A brilliant parodist. . . . There is not a dull page in this book, we had almost said not a dull line. In 'Elegi Musarum' he has parodied Mr. Watson to the life . . . There is much more which it is tempting to transfer to this place, but we will merely point out the penetrating satire of the lines 'To a Boy-Poet of the Decadence,' the excruciating bombast of the epistles to and from Kaiser Wilhelm, the delicious fun of 'The Rhyme of the Kipperling,' and the fresh, elastic style of every one of the rhymes from the first page to the last. In its field, 'The Battle of the Bays' will be a classic."—*New York Tribune*.

"Better parodies we have not seen for many a year."—*Boston Herald*.

"An imitable parodist."—*Baltimore News*.

# The Battle of the Bays.

*By the same Author*  
**HORACE AT CAMBRIDGE**  
**TILLERS OF THE SAND**

# THE BATTLE OF THE BAYS.



BY OWEN SEAMAN

JOHN LANE  
THE BODLEY HEAD  
LONDON & NEW YORK

MDCCCLXVII

J.W.

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## I. THE BATTLE OF THE BAYS.

I.

### A SONG OF RENUNCIATION.

(AFTER A. C. S.)

IN the days of my season of salad,  
When the down was as dew on my cheek,  
And for French I was bred on the ballad,  
For Greek on the writers of Greek,—  
Then I sang of the rose that is ruddy,  
Of ‘pleasure that winces and stings,’  
Of white women and wine that is bloody,  
And similar things.

Of Delight that is dear as Desi-er,  
And Desire that is dear as Delight ;  
Of the fangs of the flame that is fi-er,  
Of the bruises of kisses that bite ;

## The Battle of the Bays.

Of embraces that clasp and that sever,  
    Of blushes that flutter and flee  
Round the limbs of Dolores, whoever  
    Dolores may be.

I sang of false faith that is fleeting  
    As froth of the swallowing seas,  
Time's curse that is fatal as Keating  
    Is fatal to amorous fleas ;  
Of the wanness of woe that is whelp of  
    The lust that is blind as a bat—  
By the help of my Muse and the help of  
    The relative THAT.

Panatheist, bruiser and breaker  
    Of kings and the creatures of kings,  
I shouted on Freedom to shake her  
    Feet loose of the fetter that clings ;  
Far rolling my ravenous red eye,  
    And lifting a mutinous lid,  
To all monarchs and matrons I said I  
    Would shock them—and did.

Thee I sang, and thy loves, O Thalassian,  
O 'noble and nude and antique !'  
Unashamed in the 'fearless old fashion'  
Ere washing was done by the week ;  
When the 'roses and rapture' that girt you  
Were visions of delicate vice,  
And the 'lilies and languors of virtue'  
Not nearly so nice.

O delights of the time of my teething,  
Félide, Fragoletta, Yolande !  
Foam-yeast of a youth in its seething  
On blasted and blithering sand !  
Snake-crowned on your tresses and belted  
With blossoms that coil and decay,  
Ye are gone ; ye are lost ; ye are melted  
Like ices in May.

Hushed now is the bibulous bubble  
Of 'lithe and lascivious' throats ;  
Long stript and extinct is the stubble  
Of hoary and harvested oats ;

## The Battle of the Bays.

From the sweets that are sour as the sorrel's  
The bees have abortively swarmed ;  
And Algernon's earlier morals  
Are fairly reformed.

I have written a loyal Armada,  
And posed in a Jubilee pose ;  
I have babbled of babies and played a  
New tune on the turn of their toes ;  
Washed white from the stain of Astarte,  
My books any virgin may buy ;  
And I hear I am praised by a party  
Called Something Mackay !

When erased are the records, and rotten  
The meshes of memory's net ;  
When the grace that forgives has forgotten  
The things that are good to forget ;  
When the trill of my juvenile trumpet  
Is dead and its echoes are dead ;  
Then the laurel shall lie on the crumpet  
And crown of my head !

## 2.

FOR THE ALBUMS OF CROWNED HEADS ONLY.

(AFTER SIR E. A.)

1. *From the third Sa'dine Box of the eighth Gazelle  
of Ghazal.*

YĀ YĀ ! Best-Belovéd ! I look to thy dimples and  
drink ;

Tiddlihî ! to thy cheek-pits and chin-pit, my  
Tulip, my Pink !

See my heart rises up like a bubble, and bursts in  
my throat,

And the dimples that draw it are Three, like the  
Men in a Boat.

Thrice Three are the Muses, and I that begat her  
should guess

That the Tenth is the TĒLE-EPHĒMERA, Pride of  
the PRESS !

## The Battle of the Bays.

And the Graces were triplets till lately the fruitful  
Ditî  
Propagated a Fourth, and the infant was W.  
G.

From my post of Propinquity prone on my lan-  
guorous knees  
My tears slither down like the Gum of Arabia's  
trees.

"Am I drunk?" Heart-Entangler ! By Hafiz, the  
Blender of Squish !

'Tis the camel that sits on the prayer-mat is drunk  
as a fish.

As I hope for the future Uprising, deny it who  
can,  
Two years I have worn the Blue Ribbon, come  
next Ramadan !

## The Battle of the Bays.

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Chest-Preserver ! thou knowest thine eyes, they  
alone, are my drink,  
Blue-black as the sloes of the Garden or Stephens  
his Ink.

On thy sugar-sweet liplets, my Cypress ! I browse  
like a bee,  
And am aching, as after a surfeit of Melon, for  
thee !

Low laid at thy feet—little feet—in the dust like a  
worm,  
Round the train of thy skirt, O my Peacock, I  
fitfully squirm.

By Allah ! I swoon, I rotate, I am sickly of hue !  
And the Infidel swore that Jam-Jam was a Temper-  
ance brew !

Heart-Punisher ! - Surely I think it was jalapped  
with gin !

Aha ! Paradise ! I am passing ! So be it ! Amin !

2. *From a little thing by the Princess Onono Goawai.*

The bulbul hummeth like a book  
 Upon the pooh-pooh tree,  
 And now and then he takes a look  
 At you and me,  
 At me and you.  
 Kuchi !  
 Kuchoo !

3. *From the Sanskrit of Matabiliwaijo.*

Wind ! a word with thee ! thou goest where my  
 Well-Preservéd lies  
 On her bed of bonny briers keeping off the wicked  
 flies.

Thou shalt know her by th' aroma of her bosom,  
 which is musk,  
 And her ivories that glisten like an elephantine  
 tusk.

Seek her coral-guarded tympanum and whisper  
“ Poppinjai ! ”

And (referring to her lover) kindly add “ A-lal-lal-  
lai ! ”

Breeze ! thou knowest my condition ; state it  
broadly, if you please,  
In a smattering of Indo-Turco-Perso-Japanese.

Say my youth is flitting freely, and before the sea-  
son goes

From the garden of my Tûtsi I am fain to pluck a  
rose.

Tell her I’m a wanton Sufî (what a Sufî really is  
She may know, perhaps—I count it one of Allah’s  
mysteries).

Fly, O blessed Breeze, and hither bring me back  
the net result ;

Fly as flies the rude mosquito from Abdullah’s  
catapult.

Fly as flies the rusty rickshaw of the Kurumaya-san,

When he scents a Hippopotam down the groves of Gulistan.

Fly and cull, O cull, a section of my Pipkin's purple tress;

Thou shalt find me drinking deeply with the Lords that rule the Mess;

Quaffing mead and mighty sodas with the Johnís, Lords of War,

Talking 'jungle in the gun-room,' underneath the deodar.

Hoo Tawâ! I go to join them; he that cometh late is curst,

For the Lords of War (by Akbar) have a most amazing thirst!

## 3.

## MARSYAS IN HADES.

(AFTER SIR L. M.)

NEXT I saw

A pensive gentleman of middle age,  
That leaned against a Druid oak, his pipe  
Pendent beneath his chin—a double one—  
(Meaning the pipe); reluctant was his breath,  
For he had mingled in the Morris dance  
And rested blown ; but damsels in their teens,  
All decorous and decorously clad,  
Their very ankles hardly visible,  
Recalled his motions ; while, for chaperon,  
Good Mrs. Grundy up against the wall  
Beamed approbation.

On his face I read

Signs of high sadness such as poets wear,  
Being divinely discontented with  
The praise of *jeunes filles*. Even as I looked,  
He touched the portion of his pipe reserved

## The Battle of the Bays.

For minor poetry of solemn tone,  
Checking the humorous stops intended for  
Electioneering posters and the like ;  
And therewithal he made the following  
Addition to his *Songs Unsung*, or else  
His *Unremarked Remarks* :

“ Dear Sir,” he said,  
“ Excuse my saying ‘ Sir ’ like that ; it is  
Our way in Hades here among the damned ;  
For you must know that some of us are damned  
Not only by faint praise but full applause  
Of simple critics. Take my case. In me  
Behold the good knight Marsyas, M.A.,  
Three times a candidate for Parliament,  
And twice retired ; a Justice of the Peace ;  
Master of Arts (I said), and better known  
In literary spheres as Master of  
The Mediocre-Obvious ; and read  
By boarding-misses in their myriads.  
These dote upon me. Sweetly have I sung  
The commonplaces of philosophy  
In common parlance.

You have read perhaps  
The Cymric Triads ? Poetry, they say,  
Excels alone by sheer simplicity  
Of language, subject, and invention. Sir !  
The excellence of mine lay that way too.  
But fate is partial. Heaven's fulgour moulds  
' To happiness some, some to unhappiness !'  
(Look you, the harp was Welsh that figured forth  
That excellent last line.) I ask you, Sir,  
What would you ? Ill content with mortal praise,  
And haply somewhat overbold, I sought  
To be as gods be ; sought, in fact, to filch  
Apollo's bays !

Ah me ! Dear me ! I fain  
Would use a stronger phrase, but hardly dare,  
Being, whatever else, respectable.  
I say I tired of vulgar homage, gift  
Of ignorance. ' High failure overleaps  
The bounds of low successes ' (there, again,  
The harp that twanged was Welsh, but with an  
echo  
Of Browning). Godlike it must be, I thought,

To climb the giddy brink ; to pen, for instance,  
An Ode to the Imperial Institute,  
And fall, if bound to, from a decent height.

I did and missed the laurel ; still I go  
On writing ; what you hear just now is blank,  
Distinctly blank, and might be measured by  
The kilomètre ; yet I rhyme as well  
A little ; but it takes a lot of time,  
And checks the lapse of my pellucid stream  
Not all conveniently.”

Thereat he paused,  
And wrung the moisture from his pipe ; but I,  
As one that was intolerably bored,  
Took even this occasion to be gone ;  
And, going, marked him how he took his stile,  
Polished the waxen tablets, and began  
To make a Royal Pæan *by request*,  
Or so he said.

## 4.

## THE RHYME OF THE KIPPERLING.

(AFTER R. K.)

[N.B.—No nautical terms or statements guaranteed.]

Away by the haunts of the Yang-tse-boo,  
Where the Yuletide runs cold gin,  
And the rollicking sign of the *Lord Knows Who*  
Sees mariners drink like sin ;  
Where the *Jolly Roger* tips his quart  
To the luck of the *Union Jack* ;  
And some are screwed on the foreign port,  
And some on the starboard tack ;—  
Ever they tell the tale anew  
Of the chase for the kipperling swag ;  
How the smack *Tommy This* and the smack  
*Tommy That*  
They broached each other like a whiskey-vat,  
And the *Fuzzy-Wuz* took the bag.

Now this is the law of the herring fleet that harries  
the northern main,  
Tattooed in scars on the chests of the tars with  
a brand like the brand of Cain :  
That none may woo the sea-born shrew save such  
as pay their way  
With a kipperling netted at noon of night and cured  
ere the crack of day.

It was the woman Sal o' the Dune, and the men  
were three to one,  
Bill the Skipper and Ned the Nipper and Sam that  
was Son of a Gun ;  
Bill was a Skipper and Ned was a Nipper and Sam  
was the Son of a Gun,  
And the woman was Sal o' the Dune, as I said, and  
the men were three to one.

There was never a light in the sky that night of the  
soft midsummer gales,  
But the great man-bloaters snorted low, and the  
young 'uns sang like whales ;

## The Battle of the Bays.

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And out laughed Sal (like a dog-toothed wheel was  
the laugh that Sal laughed she) :  
“ Now who’s for a bride on the shady side of up’ards  
of forty-three ? ”

And Neddy he swore by butt and bend, and Billy  
by bend and bitt,  
And nautical names that no man frames but your  
amateur nautical wit ;  
And Sam said, “ Shiver my topping-lifts and scuttle  
my foc’sle yarn,  
And may I be curst, if I’m not in first with a kip-  
perling slued astarn ! ”

Now the smack *Tommy This* and the smack *Tommy That* and the *Fuzzy-Wuz* smack, all three,  
Their captains bold, they were Bill and Ned and  
Sam respectivelee.

And it’s writ in the rules that the primary schools  
of kippers should get off cheap  
For a two mile reach off Foulness beach when the  
July tide’s at neap ;

## The Battle of the Bays.

And the lawless lubbers that lust for loot and filch  
the yearling stock

They get smart raps from the coastguard chaps with  
their blunderbuss fixed half-cock.

Now Bill the Skipper and Ned the Nipper could  
tell green cheese from blue,

And Bill knew a trick and Ned knew a trick, but  
Sam knew a trick worth two.

So Bill he sneaks a corporal's breeks and a belt of  
pipeclayed hide,

And splices them on to the jibsail-boom like a  
troopship on the tide.

And likewise Ned to his masthead he runs a rag of  
the Queen's,

With a rusty sword and a moke on board to bray  
like the Horse Marines.

But Sam sniffs gore and he keeps off-shore and he  
waits for things to stir,

Then he tracks for the deep with a long fog-horn  
rigged up like a bowchasér.

Now scarce had Ned dropped line and lead when  
he spots the pipeclayed hide,  
And the corporal's breeks on the jibsail-boom like  
a troopship on the tide ;  
And Bill likewise, when he ups and spies the slip  
of a rag of the Queen's,  
And the rusty sword, and he sniffs aboard the  
moke of the Horse Marines.

So they each luffed sail, and they each turned tail,  
and they whipped their wheels like mad,  
When the one he said " By the Lord, it's Ned ! "  
and the other, " It's Bill, by Gad ! "

Then about and about, and nozzle to snout, they  
rammed through breach and brace,  
And the splinters flew as they mostly do when a  
Government test takes place.

Then up stole Sam with his little ram and the  
nautical talk flowed free,  
And in good bold type might have covered the  
two front sheets of the *P. M. G.*

## The Battle of the Bays.

But the fog-horn bluff was safe enough, where all  
was weed and weft,  
And the conger-eels were a-making meals, and the  
pick of the tackle left  
Was a binnacle-lid and a leak in the bilge and the  
chip of a cracked sheerstrake  
And the corporal's belt and the moke's cool pelt  
and a portrait of Francis Drake.

So Sam he hauls the dead men's trawls and he  
booms for the harbour-bar,  
And the splitten fry are salted dry by the blink of  
the morning star.

And Sal o' the Dune was wed next moon by the  
man that paid his way  
With a kipperling netted at noon of night and  
cured ere the crack of day ;  
For such is the law of the herring fleet that bloats  
on the northern main,  
Tattooed in scars on the chests of the tars with a  
brand like the brand of Cain.

## The Battle of the Bays.

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And still in the haunts of the Yang-tse-boo  
Ever they tell the tale anew  
    Of the chase for the kipperling swag ;  
How the smack *Tommy This* and the smack  
    *Tommy That*  
They broached each other like a whiskey-vat,  
    And the *Fuzzy-Wuz* took the bag.

## The Battle of the Bays.

5.

## A BALLAD OF A BUN.

(AFTER J. D.)

‘ I am sister to the mountains now,  
And sister to the sun and moon.’

‘ Heed not belletrist jargon.’

JOHN DAVIDSON.

FROM Whitsuntide to Whitsuntide—

That is to say, all through the year—  
Her patient pen was occupied  
With songs and tales of pleasant cheer.

But still her talent went to waste  
Like flotsam on an open sea ;  
She never hit the public taste,  
Or knew the knack of Bellettrie.

Across the sounding City's fogs  
There hurtled round her weary head  
The thunder of the rolling logs ;  
“ The Critics' Carnival ! ” she said.

Immortal prigs took heaven by storm,  
Prigs scattered largesses of praise ;  
The work of both was rather warm ;  
“ This is,” she said, “ the thing that pays ! ”

Sharp envy turned her wine to blood—  
I mean it turned her blood to wine ;  
And this resolve came like a flood—  
“ The cake of knowledge must be mine !

“ I am in Eve’s predicament—  
I sha’n’t be happy till I’ve sinned ;  
Away ! ” She lightly rose, and sent  
Her scruples sailing down the wind.

She did not tear her open breast,  
Nor leave behind a track of gore,  
But carried flannel next her chest,  
And wore the boots she always wore.

Across the sounding City’s din  
She wandered, looking indiscreet,  
And ultimately landed in  
The neighbourhood of Regent Street.

She ran against a resolute  
Policeman standing like a wall ;  
She kissed his feet and asked the route  
To where they held the Carnival.

Her strange behaviour caused remark ;  
They said, " Her reason has been lost ; "  
Beside her eyes the gas was dark,  
But that was owing to the frost.

A Decadent was dribbling by ;  
" Lady," he said, " you seem undone ;  
You need a panacea ; try  
This sample of the Bodley bun.

" It is fulfilled of precious spice,  
Whereof I give the recipe ;—  
Take common dripping, stew in vice,  
And serve with vertu ; taste and see !

" And lo ! I brand you on the brow  
As kin to Nature's lowest germ ;  
You are sister to the microbe now,  
And second-cousin to the worm."

He gave her of his golden store,  
Such hunger hovered in her look ;  
She took the bun, and asked for more,  
And went away and wrote a book.

To put the matter shortly, she  
Became the topic of the town ;  
In all the lists of Bellettrie  
Her name was regularly down.

“ We recognise,” the critics wrote,  
“ Maupassant’s verve and Heine’s wit ; ”  
Some even made a verbal note  
Of Shakespeare being out of it.

The seasons went and came again ;  
At length the languid Public cried :  
“ It is a sorry sort of Lane  
That hardly ever turns aside.

“ We want a little change of air ;  
On that,” they said, “ we must insist ;  
We cannot any longer bear  
The seedy sex-impressionist.”

Across the sounding City's din  
This rumour smote her on the ear :  
“ The publishers are going in  
For songs and tales of pleasant cheer ! ”

“ Alack ! ” she said, “ I lost the art,  
And left my womanhood foredone,  
When first I trafficked in the mart  
All for a mess of Bodley bun.

“ I cannot cut my kin at will,  
Or jilt the protoplastic germ ;  
I am sister to the microbe still,  
And second-cousin to the worm ! ”

6.

A VIGO-STREET ECLOGUE.

(AFTER THE SAME.)

Mæcenas. John. George. Arthur. Grant. Richard.

MÆCENAS.

What ho ! a merry Christmas ! Pff !  
Sharp blows the frosty blizzard's whff !  
Pile on more logs and let them roll,  
And pass the humming wassail-bowl !

JOHN.

The wassail-bowl ! the wind is snell !  
Drinc hael ! and warm the poet's pell !

MÆCENAS.

Richard ! say something rustic.

RICHARD.

Lo !

The customary mistletoe,  
Prehensile on the apple-bough,  
Invites the usual kiss.

## The Battle of the Bays.

GEORGE.

And now  
Cathartic hellebore should be  
A cure for imbecility.

GRANT.

Now holly-berries have begun  
To blush for Women That Have Done.

ARTHUR.

The farmer sticks his stuffy goose !

MÆCENAS.

Come, come, you grow a little loose ;  
That's Michaelmas ; you must remember  
That Michaelmas is in September !

ARTHUR.

Northward the swallow sweeps his wing.

MÆCENAS.

No, no ! the bird arrives in spring !

ARTHUR.

Such knowledge fits the country clown ;  
We've better things to note in town.  
What's Nature's lore compared with women's ?

JOHN.

For this enigma go to S-m-ns ;  
He is the—

ARTHUR.

Yes, I am, I know,  
The devil of a Romeo !

JOHN.

Hark ! hark ! the waits, the precious waits !  
Their music beats at Heaven's gates.

MÆCENAS.

What Bodley wight will sing a stave  
To match their strumming ? I would have  
The manly bass of Hobbes's voice ;  
But Unwin's house is Hobbes's choice.  
George ! you've a baritone at need.

GEORGE.

Alas ! my famous *Keynotes* lead  
To *Discords*.

JOHN.

I've a little thing  
*Of Resurrection.* Shall I sing ?

ARTHUR.

Please do ; but à propos of what ?

JOHN.

I cannot say, unless *de bottes*.

[*Proceeds to sing a Ballad of Resurrection.*

A letter-card from my dear love !  
O folded page of blessed blue !  
She burst her many-buttoned glove,  
And ripped the perforation through.

“ My love, to-night, about eleven,  
With never a priest or passing-bell,  
We die ! and meet, with luck, in Heaven,  
But anyhow at least in Hell ! ”

Her courage very nearly failed,  
In fact she swooned along the floor ;  
But curiosity prevailed,  
She came again and read some more.

“ There is no way but this to choose ;  
My people fain would have us wed ;  
But you and I have later views,  
And scorn the vulgar marriage-bed.

“ Far be it from me to dictate  
How best to break the mortal bond,  
But personally I may state  
That I shall use the village pond.

“ Be punctual, love, and let us meet  
For weal or woe !  
This line has lost a pair of feet ;  
The post is now about to go.”

Ay, ay, she thought, to meet were well,  
But if we found each other out ?  
You, say, in Heaven, I in Hell,  
Or else the other way about !

Nay, there be heavy odds, she said,  
One fate shall save us both or damn ;  
We surely shall be bracketed !  
She ceased and sent a telegram.

To Guy le Preux de Balthazar—  
Here followed his address, and then  
This pregnant message—“ Right you are ! ”  
She wrote it with the office pen.

She flashed the phrase along the wires,  
Then, passing by a dagger-shop,  
Bought one and wiped it on her sire’s  
Best graduated razor-strop.

On second thoughts, she said, I lean  
To poison ; true, a knife like this  
Looks pretty, rib and rib between,  
But people very often miss.

She sought the chemist in his place ;  
He sampled her with searching eye ;  
She looked him frankly in the face,  
And told a wicked, wicked lie.

" My hen," she said,—“ a bantam blend—  
Has hatched a poor demented chick ;  
To ease the gentle creature's end  
I want a pint of arsenic.”

The chemist deemed the order large,  
But said no thing and drew the drug ;  
She seized and bore the sacred charge  
Before her in a pewter mug.

At tea she faced her fell intent ;  
Dressing, she lightly laughed at doom ;  
Dined with the family, and spent  
The evening in the drawing-room.

At ten the early rooster crowed ;  
Ten-thirty struck and she was gone ;  
She crossed alone the naked road ;  
The road had really nothing on.

Her golden braids hung down her back ;  
Within her side she felt a stitch ;  
And once the moon behind the wrack  
Came out and caught her in a ditch.

Once ere she reached the trysting-pear  
She broke the slumber of the rooks ;  
She wrung her hands, she tore her hair,  
And did as people do in books.

From out her cloak she fetched the drug—  
“Thy health, my love, in Heaven or Hell !”  
Deep to the dregs she drained the mug  
And dropped it, feeling far from well.

Upon the punctual stroke her fond  
True lover kept the oath he swore ;  
Plunged softly in the village pond,  
But feeling chilly swam ashore.

Next morning in the judgment-place  
Two pallid prisoners were tried ;  
Their guilt was plain ; it was a case  
Of ineffective suicide.

Yestreen a member of the Force  
Had found a woman deadly sick,  
Lamenting, with sincere remorse,  
An overdose of arsenic.

Another heard upon his beat  
One darkly muttering, " This is Hell ! "  
His weed was wet from head to feet ;  
He put him in a common cell.

The Justice chewed the evidence ;  
His eyes were soft, his lips were bland ;  
It was, he said, a first offence ;  
He merely gave a reprimand.

" Go free, my puppets, keep the laws,  
And get ye wed at once," said he ;  
The court indulged in rude applause ;  
The usher cleared the gallery.

The prison-warder, deeply stirred,  
Approached the culprits at the bar ;  
Then haled them forth without a word  
Towards the nearest Registrar.

## RICHARD.

John, you surpass yourself. Next week  
Expect a flattering critique !

JOHN.

The waits are whining in the cold  
With clavicorn and clarigold ;  
They play them like a crumpled horn,  
The clarigold and clavicorn.

## 7.

## AN ODE TO SPRING IN THE METROPOLIS.

(AFTER R. LE G.)

Is this the Seine ?  
And am I altogether wrong  
About the brain,  
Dreaming I hear the British tongue ?  
Dear Heaven ! what a rhyme !  
And yet 'tis all as good  
As some that I have fashioned in my time,  
Like *bud* and *wood* ;  
And on the other hand you couldn't have a more  
precise or neater  
Metre.

Is this, I ask, the Seine ?  
And yonder sylvan lane,  
Is it the *Bois* ?  
*Ma foi !*  
*Comme elle est chic*, my Paris, my grisette !  
Yet may I not forget

That London still remains the missus  
Of this Narcissus.

No, no ! 'tis not the Seine !  
It is the artificial mere  
That permeates St. James's Park.  
The air is bosom-shaped and clear ;  
And, Himmel ! do I hear the lark,  
The good old Shelley-Wordsworth lark ?  
Even now, I prithee,  
Hark  
Him hammer  
On Heaven's harmonious stithy,  
Dew-drunken—like my grammar !

And O the trees !  
Beneath their shade the hairless coot  
Waddles at ease,  
Hushing the magic of his gurgling beak ;  
Or haply in Tree-worship leans his cheek  
Against their blind  
And hoary rind,

Observing how the sap  
Comes humming upwards from the tap-  
Root !  
Thrice happy, hairless coot !

And O the sun !  
See, see, he shakes  
His big red hands at me in wanton fun !  
A glorious image that ! it might be Blake's ;  
As in my critical capacity I took occasion to  
    remark elsewhere,  
When heaping praise  
On this exceptionally happy phrase,  
Although I made it up myself.  
But I and Blake, we really constitute a pair,  
Each being rather like an artless woodland elf.

And O the stars ! I cannot say  
I see a star just now,  
Not at this time of day ;  
But anyhow  
The stars are all my brothers ;  
(This verse is shorter than the others).

O Constitution Hill !  
(This verse is shorter still).

Ah ! London, London in the Spring !  
You are, you know you are,  
So full of curious sights,  
Especially by nights.  
From gilded bar to gilded bar  
Youth goes his giddy whirl,  
His heart fulfilled of Music-Hall,  
His arm fulfilled of girl !  
I frankly call  
That last effect a perfect pearl !

I know it's  
Not given to many poets  
To frame so fair a thing  
As this of mine, of Spring.  
Indeed, the world grows Lilliput  
All but  
A precious few, the heirs of utter godlihead,  
Who wear the yellow flower of blameless bodlihead !

## The Battle of the Bays.

41

And they, with Laureates dead, look down  
On smaller fry unworthy of the crown,  
Mere mushroom men, puff-balls that advertise  
And bravely think to brush the skies.

Great is advertisement with little men !

*Moi, qui vous parle, L- G-ll—nn-,*  
Have told them so ;  
I ought to know !

8.

## VET.

(AFTER F. E. W.)

SING me a drawing-room song, darling !  
    Sing by the sunset's glow ;  
Now while the shadows are long, darling ;  
    Now while the lights are low ;  
Something so chaste and so coy, darling !  
    Something that melts the chest ;  
Milder than even Molloy, darling !  
    Better than Bingham's best.

Sing me a drawing-room song, darling !  
    Sing as you sang of yore,  
Lisping of love that is strong, darling !  
    Strong as a big barn-door ;  
Let the true knight be bold, darling !  
    Let him arrive too late ;  
Stick in a bower of gold, darling !  
    Stick in a golden gate.

Sing me a drawing-room song, darling !  
Bear on the angels' wings  
Children that know no wrong, darling !  
Little cherubic things !  
Sing of their sunny hair, darling !  
Get them to die in June ;  
Wake, if you can, on the stair, darling !  
Echoes of tiny shoon.

Sing me a drawing-room song, darling !  
Sentiment may be false,  
Yet it will worry along, darling !  
Set to a tum-tum valse ;  
See that the verses are few, darling !  
Keep to the rule of three ;  
That will be better for you, darling !  
Certainly better for me.

## 9.

## ELEGI MUSARUM.

(AFTER W. W.)

[To Mr. St. Loe Strachey.]

DAWN of the year that emerges, a fine and ebullient Phœnix,

Forth from the cinders of Self, out of the ash of the Past ;

Year that discovers my Muse in the thick of purpureal sonnets,

Slating diplomacy's sloth, blushing for 'Abdul the d—d' ;

Year that in guise of a herald declaring the close of the tourney

Clears the redoubtable lists hot with the Battle of Bays ;

Binds on the brows of the Tory, the highly respectable Austin,

Laurels that Phœbus of old wore on the top of his tuft ;

Leaving the locks of the hydra, of Bodley the  
numerous-headed,

Clean as the chin of a boy, bare as a babe in a  
bath ;

Year that—I see in the vista the principal verb of  
the sentence

Loom as a deeply-desired bride that is late at  
the post—

Year that has painfully tickled the lachrimal nerves  
of the Muses,

Giving Another the gift due to Respectfully  
Theirs ;—

*Hinc illæ lacrimæ!* Ah, reader ! I grossly misled  
you ;

See, it was false ; there is no principal verb after  
all !

His likewise is the anguish, who followed with soft  
serenading

Me as the tremulous tide tracks the meandering  
moon ;

Climbing as Romeo climb, peradventure by help of  
a flower-pot,

Where in her balconied bower lay, inexpressibly  
coy,

Juliet, not as the others, supinely, insanely erotic,  
Pallid and yellow of hue, very degenerate souls,  
Rioting round with the rapture of palpitant ichor-  
ous ardour,

But an immaculate maid, 'one,' you may say,  
'of the best' !

His, I repeat, is the anguish—my journalist, eulo-  
gist critic,

Strachey, the generous judge, Saintly unlimited  
Loe !

Vainly the stolid *Spectator*, bewildered with fabu-  
lous bow-wows,

Sick with a surfeit of dog, ran me for all it was  
worth !

Vainly—if I may recur to a metaphor drawn from  
the ocean,

Long (in a figure of speech) tied to the tail of  
the moon—

Vainly, O excellent organ ! with ample and aque-  
ous unction

Once, as a rule, in a week, ‘cleansing the Earth  
of her stain’ ;

(Here you will possibly pardon the natural scion of  
poets,

Proud with humility’s pride, spoiling a passage  
from Keats)—

Vainly your voice on the ears of impregnable  
Laureate-makers,

Rang as the sinuous sea rings on a petrified coast ;

Vainly your voice with a subtle and slightly indeli-  
cate largess,

Broke on an obdurate world hymning the advent  
of Me ;

When from the ‘commune of air,’ from ‘the ex-  
quisite fabric of Silence,’

I, a superior orb, burst into exquisite print !

What shall we say for your greeting, O good horti-  
cultural Alfred !

Royalty’s darling and pride, crown of the Salis-  
bury Press ?

Now when the negligent Public, in search of a  
subject for dinner,

Asks for the names of your books, Lord ! what  
a boom there will be !

Hoarse in Penbryn are the howlings that rise for  
the hope of the Cymri ;

Over her Algernon's head Putney composes a dirge ;  
Edwin anathematises politely in various lingos ;

Davidson ruminates hard over a *Ballad of Hell* ;  
Fondly Le Gallienne fancies how pretty the Del-  
phian laurels

Would have appeared on his own hairy and pas-  
sionate poll ;

I, imperturbably careless, untainted of jealousy's  
jaundice,

Simply regret the profane contumely done to  
the Muse ;

Done to the Muse in the person of Me, her patron,  
that never

Licked Ministerial lips, dusted the boots of the  
Court !

Surely I hear through the noisy and nauseous  
clamour of Carlton

Sobs of the sensitive Nine heave upon Helicon's  
hump !

## II. TO MR. WILLIAM WATSON.

[On writing the first instalment of *The Purple East*, a 'fine sonnet which it is our privilege to publish.'—*Westminster Gazette*, Dec. 16, 1895.]

DEAR Mr. Watson, we have heard with wonder,  
Not all unmingled with a sad regret,  
That little penny blast of purple thunder,  
You issued in the *Westminster Gazette* ;  
The Editor describes it as a sonnet ;  
I wish to make a few remarks upon it.

*Never, O craven England, nevermore  
Prate thou of generous effort, righteous aim !*  
So ran the lines, and left me very sore,  
For you may guess my heart was hot with shame:  
Even thus early in your ample song  
I felt that something must be really wrong.

But when I learned that our ignoble nation  
Lay sleeping like a log, and lay alone,  
Propping, according to your information,  
*Abdul the Damned on his infernal throne,*  
O then I scattered to the wind my fears,  
And nearly went and joined the Volunteers.

But just in time the thought occurred to me  
That England commonly commits her course  
To men as good at heart as even we  
And possibly much richer in resource ;  
That we had better mind our own affairs  
And leave these gentlemen to manage theirs.

It further seemed a work uncommon light  
For one like you, a casual civilian,  
To order half a hemisphere to fight  
And slaughter one another by the million,  
While you yourself, a paper Galahad,  
Spilt ink for blood upon a blotting-pad.

The days are gone when sword and poet's pen  
One gallant gifted hand was wont to wield ;  
When Taillefer in face of Harold's men  
Rode foremost on to Senlac's fatal field,  
And tossed his sword in air, and sang a spell  
Of Roland's battle-song, and, singing, fell.

The days are gone when troubadours by dozens  
Polished their steel and joined the stout crusade,  
Strumming, in memory of pretty cousins,  
*The Girl I left behind Me*, on parade ;  
They often used to rattle off a ballad in  
The intervals of punishing the Saladin.

In later times, of course I know there's Byron,  
Who by his own report could play the man ;  
I seem to see him with his Lesbian lyre on,  
And brandishing a useful yataghan ;  
Though never going altogether strong, he  
Managed at least to die at Missolonghi.

## The Battle of the Bays.

No more the trades of lute and lance are linked,  
Though doubtless under many martial bonnets  
Brave heads there be that harbour the distinct  
Belief that they can manufacture sonnets ;  
But on the other hand a bard is not  
Supposed to run the risk of being shot.

Then since your courage lacks a crucial test,  
And politics were never your profession,  
Dear Mr. Watson, won't you find it best  
To temper valour with a due discretion ?  
That so, despite the fond *Spectator's* booming,  
Above your brow the bays may yet be blooming.

## III. ENGLAND'S ALFRED ABROAD.

[M. Alfred Austin, poète-lauréat d'Angleterre, vient d'arriver à Nice, où il a devancé la Reine. Il était, hier, dans les jardins de Monte-Carlo. Sera-ce sous notre ciel qu'il écrira son premier poème?—*Menton-Mondain.*]

WRONG? are they wrong? Of course they are,  
I venture to reply;  
For I bore 'my first' (and, I hope, my worst)  
A month or so gone by;  
And I can't repeat it under this  
Or any other sky.

What! has the public never heard  
In these benighted climes  
That nascent note of my Laureate throat,  
That fluty fitte of rhymes  
Which occupied about a half  
A column of the *Times*?

## The Battle of the Bays.

They little know what they have lost,  
Nor what a carnal beano  
They might have spent in the thick of Lent  
If only Daniel Leno  
Had sung them *Jameson's Ride* and knocked  
The Monaco Casino.

Some day the croupiers' furtive eyes  
Will all be wringing wet ;  
Even the Prince will hardly mince  
The language of regret  
At entertaining unawares  
The famed Alhambra Pet.

But still not quite incognito  
I mark the moving scene,  
In a tepid zone where (like my own)  
The palms are ever green,  
And find myself reported as  
A herald of the Queen.

Here where aloft the heavens are blue,  
And blue the seas below,  
I roll my eye and fondly try  
To get the rhymes to go,  
As I pace *The Garden that I love*,  
Composing all I know.

But when my poet-pinions droop,  
And all the air is wan,  
I enter in to the courts of sin  
And put a louis on,  
And hold my heart and look again,  
And lo ! the thing is gone !

Wrong ? is it wrong ? To baser crafts  
Has England's Alfred pandered,  
Who once to the sign of Phœbus' shrine  
With awesome gait meandered,  
And ever wrote in the cause of right  
According to his *Standard* ?

Nay ! this is life ! to take a turn  
On Fortune's captious crust ;  
To pluck the day in a human way  
Like men of common dust ;  
But O ! if England's only bard  
Should absolutely bust !

A laureate never borrows on  
His coming quarter's pay ;  
And I mean to stop or ever I pop  
My crown of peerless bay ;  
So I'll take the next *rapide* to Nice,  
And the 'bus to Cimiez.

MENTONE, Feb., 1896.

## IV. LILITH LIBIFERA.

EXHUMED from out the inner cirque of Hell  
By kind permission of the Evil One,  
Behold her devilish presentment, done  
By Master Aubrey's weird unearthly spell !  
This is that Lady known as Jezebel,  
Or Lilith, Eden's woman-scorpion,  
Libifera, that is, that takes the bun,  
Borgia, Vivien, Cussed Damosel.

Hers are the bulging lips that fairly break  
The pumpkin's heart ; and hers the eyes that  
shame  
The wanton ape that culls the cocoa-nuts.  
Even such the yellow-bellied toads that slake  
Nocturnally their amorous-ardent flame  
In the wan waste of weary water-butts.

## V. ARS POSTERA.

[On an advertisement of *A Comedy of Sighs.*]

MR. Aubrey Beer de Beers,  
You're getting quite a high renown ;  
Your Comedy of Leers, you know,  
Is posted all about the town ;  
This sort of stuff I cannot puff,  
As Boston says, it makes me 'tired' ;  
Your Japanee-Rossetti girl  
Is not a thing to be desired.

Mr. Aubrey Beer de Beers,  
New English Art (excuse the chaff)  
Is like the Newest Humour style,  
It's not a thing at which to laugh ;  
But all the same, you need not maim  
A beauty reared on Nature's rules ;  
A simple maid *au naturel*  
Is worth a dozen spotted ghouls.

Mr. Aubrey Beer de Beers,  
    You put strange phantoms on our walls,  
If not so daring as *To-day's*,  
    Nor quite so Hardy as *St. Paul's* ;  
Her sidelong eyes, her giddy guise,—  
    *Grande Dame Sans Merci* she may be ;  
But there is that about her throat  
    Which I myself don't care to see.

Mr. Aubrey Beer de Beers,  
    The Philistines across the way,  
They say her lips—well, never mind  
    Precisely what it is they say ;  
But I have heard a drastic word  
    That scarce is fit for dainty ears ;  
But then their taste is not the kind  
    Of taste to flatter Beer de Beers.

Bless me, Aubrey Beer de Beers,  
    On fair Elysian lawns apart  
Burd Helen of the Trojan time  
    Smiles at the latest mode of Art ;

Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
It's not important to be New ;  
New Art would better Nature's best,  
But Nature knows a thing or two.

Aubrey, Aubrey Beer de Beers,  
Are there no models at your gate,  
Live, shapely, possible and clean ?  
Or won't they do to 'decorate' ?  
Then by all means bestrew your scenes  
With half the lotuses that blow,  
Pothooks and fishing-lines and things,  
But let the human woman go !

## VI. A NEW BLUE BOOK.

[It was hardly to be supposed that the young decadents who once rioted . . . in the *Yellow Book* would be content to remain in obscurity after the metamorphosis of that periodical and the consequent exclusion of themselves. The *Savoy*, we learn, to be edited by Mr. Arthur Symons and Mr. Aubrey Beardsley, will appear early in December.—*Globe*.]

'THE world's great age begins anew,'  
Cold virtue's weeds are cast ;  
Our heads are light, our tales are blue,  
And things are moving fast ;  
And no one any longer quarrels  
With anybody else's morals.

A racier journal stamps its pages  
With Beardsleys braver far ;  
A bolder Editor engages  
To shame the morning star,  
On *London Nights*, not near so chilly,  
Sampling a shadier Piccadilly.

Satyr and Faun their late repose  
Now burst like anything ;  
New Mænads, turning sprightlier toes,  
Enjoy a jauntier fling ;  
With lustier lips old Pan shall play  
Drain-pipes along the sewer's way.

Priapus, wrongly left for dead,  
Is dead no more than Pan ;  
Silenus rises from his bed  
And hiccups like a man ;  
There's something rather chaste (between us)  
About Priapus and Silenus.

O cease to brew your Bodley pap  
Whence all the spice is spent !  
The splendour of its primal tap  
Was gone when Aubrey went ;  
Behold that subtle Sphinx prepare  
Fresh liquors fit to lift your hair.

Another Magazine shall rise  
And paint the palsied town,  
Of humbler hue, of simpler size,  
And sold at half a crown ;  
Please note the pregnant brand—*Savoy*,  
And don't confuse with *saveloy*.\*

\* Saveloy, a kind of sausage; French *cervelas*, from its containing brains.—SKEAT.

## VII. TO A BOY-POET OF THE DECADE.

[Showing curious reversal of epigram—‘La nature l'a fait sanglier ; la civilisation l'a réduit à l'état de cochon.’]

BUT my good little man, you have made a mistake

If you really are pleased to suppose  
That the Thames is alight with the lyrics you  
make ;

We could all do the same if we chose.

From Solomon down, we may read, as we run,  
Of the ways of a man and a maid ;  
There is nothing that's new to us under the sun,  
And certainly not in the shade.

The erotic affairs that you fiddle aloud  
Are as vulgar as coin of the mint ;  
And you merely distinguish yourself from the  
crowd  
By the fact that you put 'em in print.

You're a 'prentice, my boy, in the primitive stage,  
And you itch, like a boy, to confess :  
When you know a bit more of the arts of the age  
You will probably talk a bit less.

For your dull little vices we don't care a fig,  
It is *this* that we deeply deplore ;  
You were cast for a common or usual pig,  
But you play the invincible bore.

## VIII. TO JULIA IN SHOOTING TOGS

and a Herrickose vein.

WHENAS to shoot my Julia goes,  
Then, then, (methinks) how bravely shows  
That rare arrangement of her clothes !

So shod as when the Huntress Maid  
With thumping buskin bruised the glade,  
She moveth, making earth afraid.

Against the sting of random chaff  
Her leathern gaiters circle half  
The arduous crescent of her calf.

Unto th' occasion timely fit,  
My love's attire doth show her wit,  
And of her legs a little bit.

Sorely it sticketh in my throat,  
She having nowhere to bestow't,  
To name the absent petticoat.

In lieu whereof a wanton pair  
Of knickerbockers she doth wear,  
Full windy and with space to spare.

Enlargéd by the bellying breeze,  
Lord ! how they playfully do ease  
The urgent knocking of her knees !

Lengthways curtailéd to her taste  
A tunic circumvents her waist,  
And soothly it is passing chaste.

Upon her head she hath a gear  
Even such as wights of ruddy cheer  
Do use in stalking of the deer.

Haply her truant tresses mock  
Some coronal of shapelier block,  
To wit, the bounding billy-cock.

## The Battle of the Bays.

Withal she hath a loaded gun,  
Whereat the pheasants, as they run,  
Do make a fair diversion.

For very awe, if so she shoots,  
My hair upriseth from the roots,  
And lo ! I tremble in my boots !

## IX. THE LINKS OF LOVE.

My heart is like a driver-club,  
That heaves the pellet hard and straight,  
That carries every let and rub,  
The whole performance really great ;  
My heart is like a bulger-head,  
That whiffles on the wily tee,  
Because my love has kindly said  
She'll halve the round of life with me.

My heart is also like a cleek,  
Resembling most the mashie sort,  
That spansks the object, so to speak,  
Across the sandy bar to port ;  
And hers is like a putting-green,  
The haven where I boast to be,  
For she assures me she is keen  
To halve the round of life with me.

Raise me a bunker, if you can,  
That beetles o'er a deadly ditch,  
Where any but the bogey-man  
Is practically bound to pitch ;  
Plant me beneath a hedge of thorn,  
Or up a figurative tree,  
What matter, when my love has sworn  
To halve the round of life with me ?

## X. SWORDS AND PLOUGHSHARES.

## PART I. PRESTO FURIOSO.

SPONTANEOUS US !

O my Camarados ! I have no delicatesse as a diplomat, but I go blind on Libertad !

Give me the flap-flap of the soaring Eagle's pinions !

Give me the tail of the British lion tied in a knot inextricable, not to be solved anyhow !

Give me a standing army (I say 'give me,' because just at present we want one badly, armies being often useful in time of war).

I see our superb fleet (I take it that we are to have a superb fleet built almost immediately) ;

I observe the crews prospectively ; they are constituted of various nationalities, not necessarily American ;

I see them sling the slug and chew the plug ;

I hear the drum begin to hum ;

## The Battle of the Bays.

Both the above rhymes are purely accidental and contrary to my principles.

We shall wipe the floor of the mill-pond with the scalps of able-bodied British tars !

I see Professor Edison about to arrange for us a torpedo-hose on wheels, likewise an infernal electro-semaphore ;

I see Henry Irving dead-sick and declining to play Corporal Brewster ;

Cornell, I yell ! I yell Cornell !

I note the Manhattan boss leaving his dry-goods store and investing in a small Gatling-gun and a ten-cent banner ;

I further note the Identity evolved out of forty-four spacious and thoughtful States ;

I note Canada as shortly to be merged in that Identity ; similarly Van Diemen's Land, Gibraltar and Stratford-on-Avon ;

Briefly, I see Creation whipped !

O ye Colonels ! I am with you (I too am a Colonel and on the pension-list) ;

I drink to the lot of you ; to Colonels Cleveland,  
Hitt, Vanderbilt, Chauncey M. Depew, O'Donovan Rossa and the late Colonel Monroe ;  
I drink an egg-flip, a morning-caress, an eye-opener, a maiden-bosom, a vermuth-cocktail,  
three sherry-cobblers and a gin-sling !

Good old Eagle !

### PART II. INTERMEZZO DOLOROSO.

[Allowing time for the fall of American securities to the extent of some odd hundred millions sterling, also for the Day of Rest.]

### PART III. ANDANTE AMABILE.

Who breathed a word of war ?  
Why, surely we are men and Plymouth brothers !  
Pray, what in thunder should we cut each other's  
Carotids for ?

Merciful powers forefend !  
For we by gold-edged bonds are bound alway,  
Besides a lot of things that never pay  
A dividend !

## The Battle of the Bays.

Christmas ! we cry thee *Ave* !  
At such a time, when hearts with love are filled,  
It seems inopportune for us to build  
    The needful navy.

In fact in many a church  
Uprise the prayer and supplicating psalm  
That Heaven would keep our spreading Eagle calm  
    Upon his perch.

Goodwill and peace and plenty !  
Our leading congregations here agree  
To vote for this arrangement, *nemine*  
    *Contradicente*.

Greatly be they extolléd  
Who occupied the tabernacle-chair  
And put it to the meeting then and there  
    And passed it solid !

That print has also played  
A useful part that sent an invitation  
To Redmond to relieve the situation  
    (Answer prepaid).

Say, Sirs, and shall we sever ?  
And mar the fair exchange of fatted steers,  
Chicago pig, and eligible peers ?

No ! never, never !

Shall gore be made to flow ?  
Like kindred Sohrabs shall we knock our Rustums,  
And blast our beautiful McKinley customs ?

Lord love us ! no !

Then, burst the sundering bar !  
Our punctured pockets yearn across the ocean ;  
Till now we never had the faintest notion  
How dear you are !

O love of other years !  
Wall Street, aweary for her broken bliss,  
Waits like a loving crocodile to kiss  
Again with tears !

## XI. TO THE LORD OF POTSDAM.

[On sending a certain telegram ]

MAJESTIC Monarch ! whom the other gods,  
For fear of their immediate removal,  
Consulting hourly, seek your awful nod's  
Approval ;

Lift but your little finger up to strike,  
And lo ! 'the massy earth is riven '(Shelley),  
The habitable globe is shaken like  
A jelly.

By your express permission for the last  
Eight years the sun has regularly risen ;  
And editors, that questioned this, have passed  
To prison.

In Art you simply have to say, "I shall !"  
Beethoven's fame is rendered transitory ;  
And Titian cloys beside your clever all-  
-egory.

We hailed you Admiral : your eagle sight  
Foresaw Her Majesty's benign intentions ;  
A uniform was ready of the right  
Dimensions.

Your wardrobe shines with all the shapes and  
shades,  
That genius can fix in fancy suitings ;  
For *levées*, false alarms, full parades  
And shootings.

But save the habit marks the man of gore  
Your spurs are yet to win, my callow Kaiser !  
Of fighting in the field you know no more  
Than I, Sir !

When Grandpapa was thanking God with hymns  
For gallant Frenchmen dying in the ditches,  
Your nurse had barely braced your little limbs  
In breeches.

And doubtless, where he roosts beside his bock,  
The Game Old Bird that played the leading  
fiddle  
Smiles grimly as he hears your perky cock-  
-a-diddle.

Be well advised, my youthful friend, abjure  
These tricks that smack of Cleon and the tan-  
ners ;  
And let the Dutch instruct a German Boor  
In manners.

Nor were you meant to solve the nations' knots,  
Or be the Earth's Protector, willy-nilly ;  
You only make yourself and royal Pots-  
-dam silly.

Our racing yachts are not at present dressed  
In bravery of bunting to amuse you,  
Nor can the licence of an honoured guest  
Excuse you.

But if your words are more than wanton play  
And you would like to meet the old sea-rover,  
Name any course from Delagoa Bay  
To Dover.

Meanwhile observe a proper reticence ;  
We ask no more ; there never was a rumour  
Of asking Hohenzollerns for a sense  
Of humour !

## XII. FROM THE LORD OF POTSDAM.

WE, William, Kaiser, planted on Our throne  
By heaven's grace, but chiefly by Our own,  
Do deign to speak. Then let the earth be dumb,  
And other nations cease their senseless hum !

Seldom, if ever, does a chance arise  
For Us to pose before Our people's eyes ;  
But this is one of them, this natal day  
Whereon Our Ancient and Imperial sway,  
Which to the battle's death-defying trump  
Welded the States in one confounded lump,  
(As many tasty meats are blent within  
The German sausage's encircling skin)  
By Our decree is twenty-five precisely,  
And, under Us (and God) still doing nicely.

Therefore ye Princelings, Plenipotentes,  
And Representatives of various States,  
A cool Imperial pint your Kaiser drains,  
Both to Our 'more immediate' domains,  
And to Our lands, Our isles beyond the sea,  
Our World-embracing Greater Germany !

## The Battle of the Bays.

81

Let loose the breathings of Our Royal Band,  
We give a rouse—*hoch! hoch!*—to HELIGOLAND !  
[Kaiserliche Kapelle plays : *O Heligoland! mein  
Heligoland!* Air—*Die Wacht am Rhein.*]

WILLIAM, KAISER, continues :—

There are that languish on this festal day  
Damned and impounded for *lèse-majesté* ;  
We, William, in Our plenitude of grace,  
Propose to pardon every hundredth case ;  
And though their sentence was no more than just  
We offer each a copy of Our bust,  
With option of a fine ; but, be it known,  
Whoso again shall deem his life his own,  
Or find in Ours the faintest flaw or fleck,  
God helping, We will hang him by the neck.  
Yea, he shall surely curse his impious star  
That dares to question Who or where We are !  
Worship your Cæsar, and (C.V.) your God ;  
Who spares the child may haply spoil the rod.

Many Our uniforms, but We are one,  
And one Our empire over which the sun,  
Careering on his cloud-compulsive way,  
Sets once, but never more than once, a day.

The seas are Ours : world-wide upon the oceans  
Our fleet commands the liveliest emotions ;  
Go where you will, you find Our German manners  
Prevailing under other people's banners ;  
Go where you will, you cannot but remark  
The cheap, but never nasty, German clerk ;  
Observe Our exports ; do you ever see  
Things made as they are made in Germany ?  
Always at home on Earth's remotest shores  
*E.g.*, among Our loved, low-German Boers,  
Freely Our folk expectorate, and there  
Our German bands inflame the balmy air ;  
Likewise again Our passionate bassoons  
Tickle the niggers of the Cameroons ;  
Or others over whom Our Eagle flaps  
In places not at present on the maps.

One more Imperial pint ! your Kaiser drinks  
To German intercourse with missing links !  
Let loose the breathings of Our Royal Band,  
We give—*hoch ! hoch !*—Our glorious HINTERLAND !

[*Kaiserliche Kapelle* plays : *O Hinterland ! mein Hinterland !* (Air as before) ; during which WILLIAM, KAISER, resumes his throne.]

## XIII. 'THE SPACIOUS TIMES.'

[On Drake's return from his filibustering expedition of 1580 the Queen went on board his ship at Deptford, and after partaking of a banquet conferred on him the honour of knighthood, at the same time declaring herself mightily pleased with all that he had done.]

I WISH that I had flourished then,  
When ruffs and raids were in the fashion,  
When Shakespeare's art and Raleigh's pen  
Encouraged patriotic passion ;  
For though I draw my happy breath  
Beneath a Queen as good and gracious,  
The times of Great Elizabeth  
Were more conveniently spacious.

Large-hearted age of cakes and ale !  
When, undeterred by nice conditions,  
Good Master Drake would lightly sail  
On little privateer commissions ;  
Careering round with sword and flame  
And no pretence of polished manners.  
He planted out in England's name  
A most refreshing lot of banners.

## The Battle of the Bays.

Blest era, when the reckless tar,  
Elated by a sense of duty,  
Feared not to face his country's Bar  
But freely helped himself to booty ;  
Returning home with bulging hold  
The Queen would meet him, much excited,  
Pronounce him worth his weight in gold  
And promptly have the hero knighted.

No Extra Special, piping hot,  
Broke out in unexpected Pyrrhics ;  
No Poet Laureate on the spot  
Composed apologetic lyrics ;  
Transpiring slowly by-and-by,  
The act was voted one of loyalty ;  
The nation winked the other eye,  
And pocketed the usual royalty.

Ere Reuter yet had found his range,  
These trifles done across the ocean  
Produced upon the Stock Exchange  
No preternatural emotion ;

Not yet the Kaiserlich I AM  
Made wingéd words and then repented ;  
He wrote as yet no telegram,  
Nor was, in fact, himself invented.

No Justice Hawkins gauged the fault  
Of irresponsible incursions ;  
The early Hawkins, gallant salt,  
Knew well the charm of such diversions ;  
Men never saw that moving sight  
When legal luminaries muster,  
And very solemnly indict  
A well-conducted filibuster.

No Member had the hardy nerve  
To criticise our depredations  
As unadapted to preserve  
The perfect comity of nations ;  
No High Commissioner would doubt  
If brigandage was quite judicial ;  
Indeed we mostly did without  
This rather eminent Official.

No Ministry would care a rap  
For theoretic arbitration ;  
They simply modified the map  
To meet the latest annexation ;  
And so without appeal to law,  
Or other needless waste of tissue,  
The Lion, where he put his paw,  
Remained and propagated issue.

To-day we wax exceeding fat  
On lands our roving fathers raided ;  
And blush with holy horror at  
Their lawless sons who do as they did ;  
No doubt the age improves a lot,  
It grows more honest, more veracious ;  
But, as I said, the times are not  
Quite so conveniently spacious.

## NOTE

To the Editors of *The World* and *The National Observer*, and to  
the Proprietors of *Punch*, I wish to express my thanks for their courtesy  
in permitting me to republish these verses. O. S.

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